Chichikogusa

Chapter 32

BY TAGAWA MI

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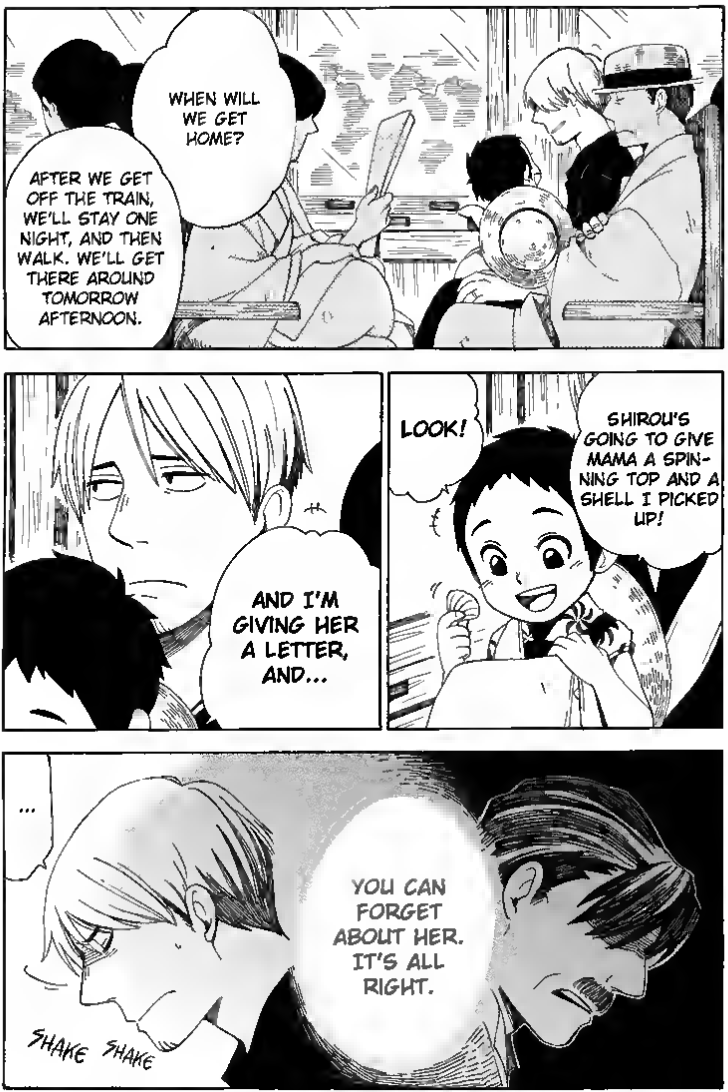
ちちこぐさ
【父子草】

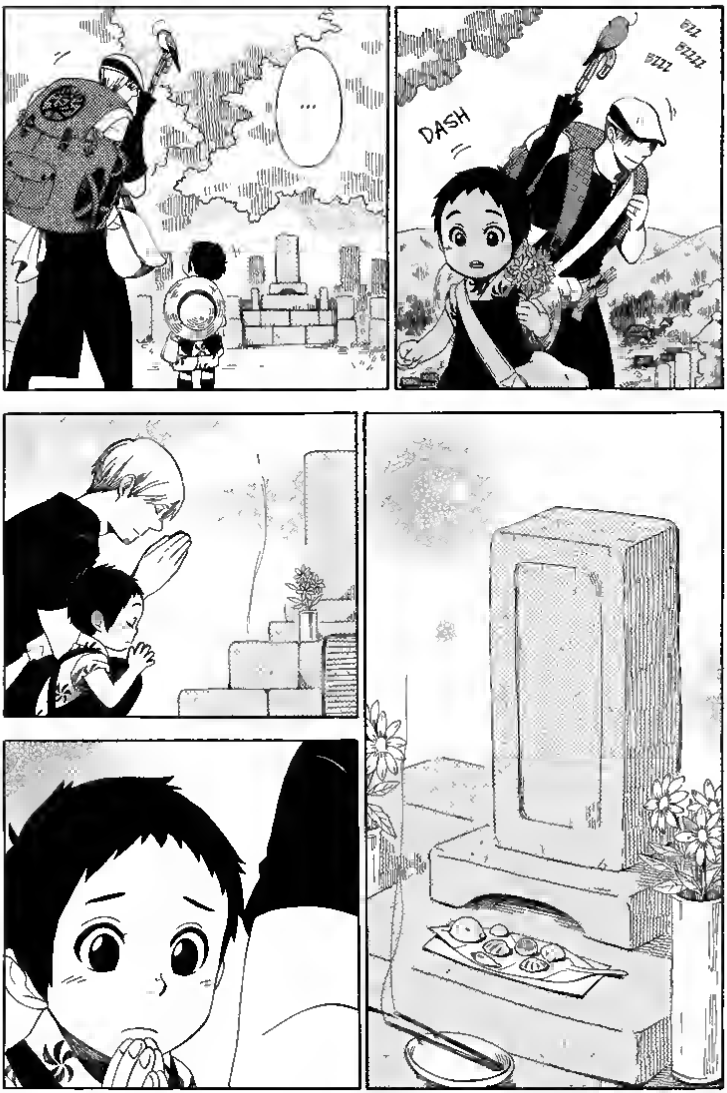
BLINK
CHIRP
...
ZZZ...
AH.
HAVE A NICE VACATION.
TAKE CARE ON YOUR TRAVELS.
BYE-BYE!

HUH?
PAPA, DID YOU HAVE FUN TOO?
DID YOU RELAX A LOT YESTERDAY?
I WAS EVEN A MEDICINE SELLER. IT WAS SO FUN!
SEE, I CAN STAY HOME ALL BY MYSELF!
I SEE.
GOOD FOR YOU!
THANKS, SHIROU.
Heh heh!
THANKS TO YOU, I HAD A PROPER BREAK.
AH, YEAH.
FLAP
Ha ha ha!
I WAS STAYING AWAKE TO SURPRISE YOU, BUT I FELL ASLEEP!


WHEN WILL WE GET HOME?
AFTER WE GET OFF THE TRAIN, WE'LL STAY ONE NIGHT, AND THEN WALK. WE'LL GET THERE AROUND TOMORROW AFTERNOON.
AND I'M GIVING HER A LETTER, AND...
LOOK!
SHIROU'S GOING TO GIVE MAMA A SPINNING TOP AND A SHELL I PICKED UP!
...
YOU CAN FORGET ABOUT HER. IT'S ALL RIGHT.
SHAKE SHAKE

OF COURSE, HIS HAVING A NEW MOTHER WOULD SOLVE A LOT OF PROBLEMS.
I'VE BEEN TRYING TO AVOID THINKING ABOUT REMARRIAGE...
BUT...
I KNOW THAT.
TOOOOOOOOT
MAYBE I SHOULD DISCUSS IT, JUST THIS ONCE...

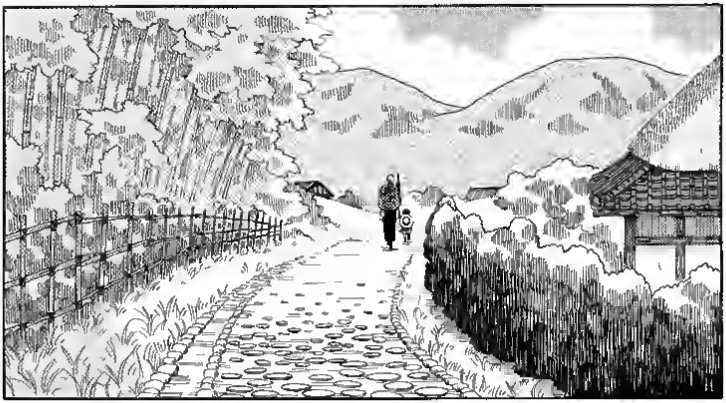
WANNA GO VISIT MAMA FIRST? WE'LL DROP BY AUNTIE'S PLACE LATER
SURE!
FLAP
CAW
WOW, IEJI'S ALREADY HERE!
TAP TAP

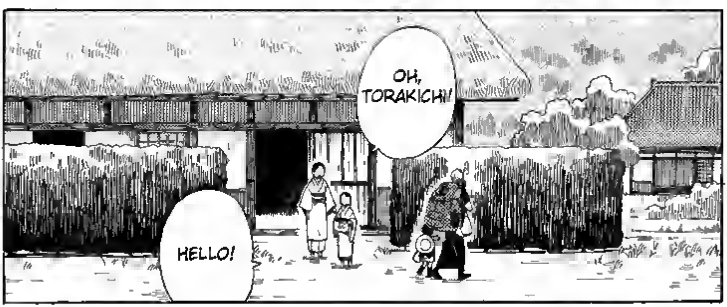

...
DASH
ZIIIP
ZIIIP
ZIIIP

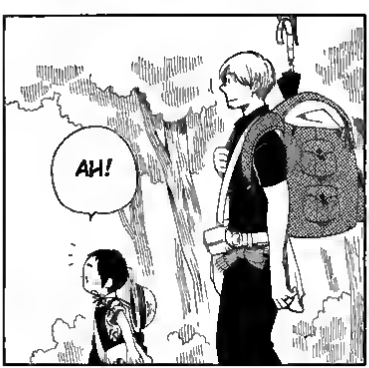
Chocolat
RUSTLE
RUSTLE RUSTLE
...
SNAP
?
HOLD OUT YOUR HAND.
HERE,

...
BITE
LET'S GIVE SOME TO MAMA TOO.
IT'S CANDY I GOT FROM SOMEBODY.

YEAH!
IT CHEERS YOU UP, RIGHT?




OH, TORAKICHI!
HELLO!

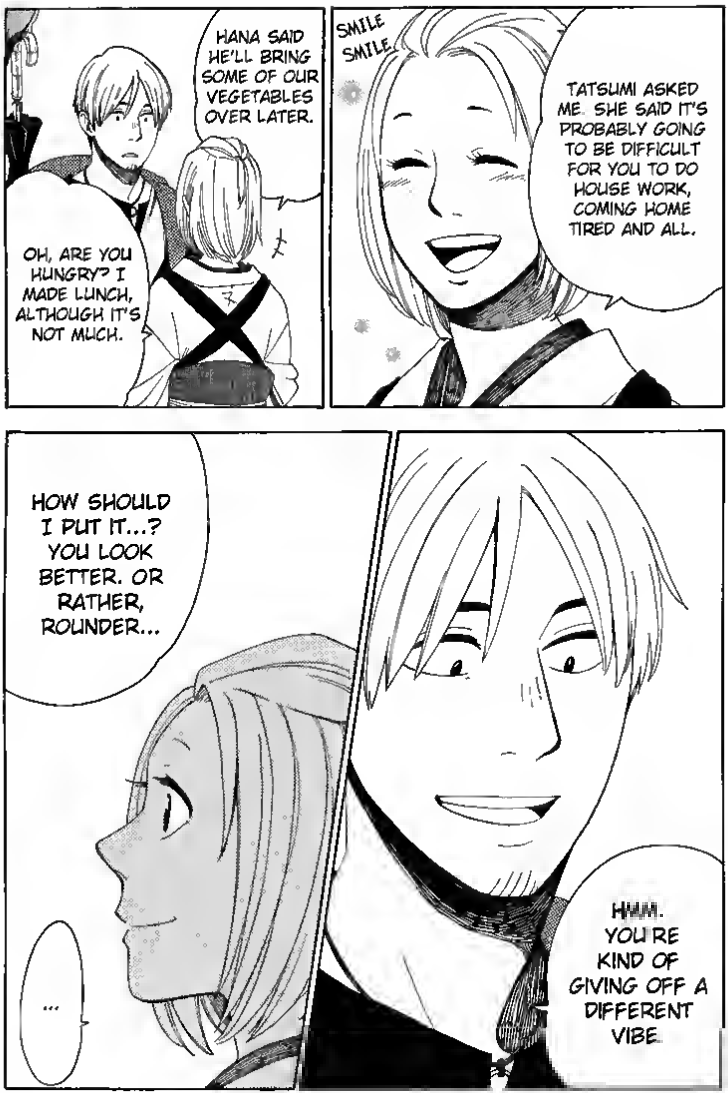

AH!

!

AH!

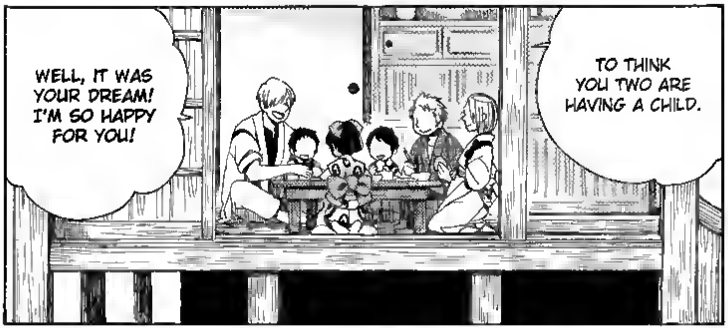
DASH
IT'S SHI-ROO-OOO-OOU!
IDIOT! DON'T RUN WITH AN AXE IN YOUR HANDS!
WELCOME BACK! WELCOME BACK!
SANA!? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE...?
HUG
IEJI TOLD US THAT YOU'D BE COMING BACK TODAY, SO WE'VE ALL BEEN GETTING READY AND WAITING FOR YOU!
EVERYONE...?
RUSTLE

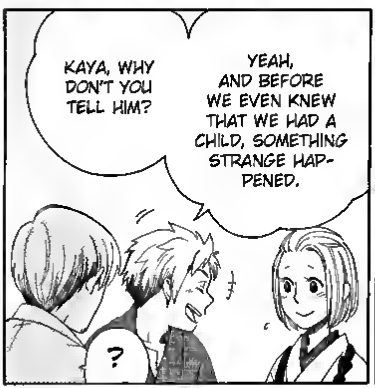
SMILE
WELCOME BACK.
HUH?
KAYA!
SORRY TO SURPRISE YOU.


HANA SAID HE'LL BRING SOME OF OUR VEGETABLES OVER LATER.
OH, ARE YOU HUNGRY? I MADE LUNCH, ALTHOUGH IT'S NOT MUCH.
SMILE SMILE
TATSUMI ASKED ME. SHE SAID IT'S PROBABLY GOING TO BE DIFFICULT FOR YOU TO DO HOUSE WORK, COMING HOME TIRED AND ALL.
HOW SHOULD I PUT IT...? YOU LOOK BETTER. OR RATHER, ROUNDER...
...
HMM. YOU'RE KIND OF GIVING OFF A DIFFERENT VIBE.

IF YOU'VE NOTICED THAT MUCH, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO FIGURE IT OUT.
UNCLE TORAKICHI, YOU'RE PRETTY THICK-HEADED.
EH?
B-BY ROUNDER I DIDN'T MEAN FATTER!
I MEANT HEALTHY AND STUFF...!
BLUUUUUUSH
Oh!
Crap.
...
POINT
AH!
WHAAAT?!
HUH?
GASP

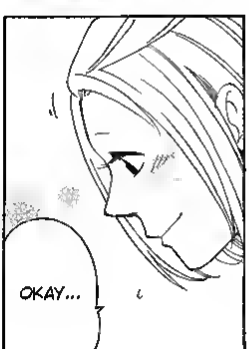
IS IT TRUE, KAYA?!
NOD
YEAH... ♡
HANA!? HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN HERE?!
YOU'RE TOO CLOSE! GET AWAY! IT'S MY CHILD!
Ha ha ha!
HEY,
STOP ACTING LIKE A HUSBAND TO SOMEBODY ELSE'S WIFE!
MAN, WHAT A SUR-PRISE!


WELL, IT WAS YOUR DREAM! I'M SO HAPPY FOR YOU!
TO THINK YOU TWO ARE HAVING A CHILD.

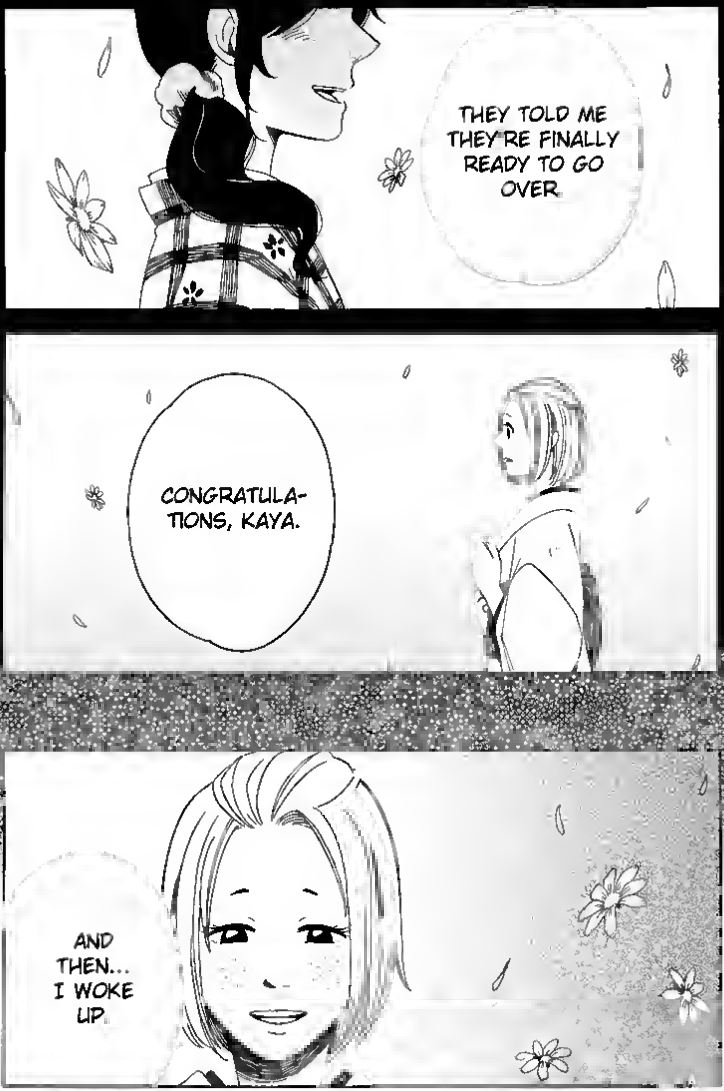

KAYA, WHY DON'T YOU TELL HIM?
YEAH, AND BEFORE WE EVEN KNEW THAT WE HAD A CHILD, SOMETHING STRANGE HAPPENED.
?

YUP.
OH, THAT'S SURPRISINGLY SOON.
RIGHT?
SHE'S SUPPOSED TO BE GIVING BIRTH NEXT YEAR.

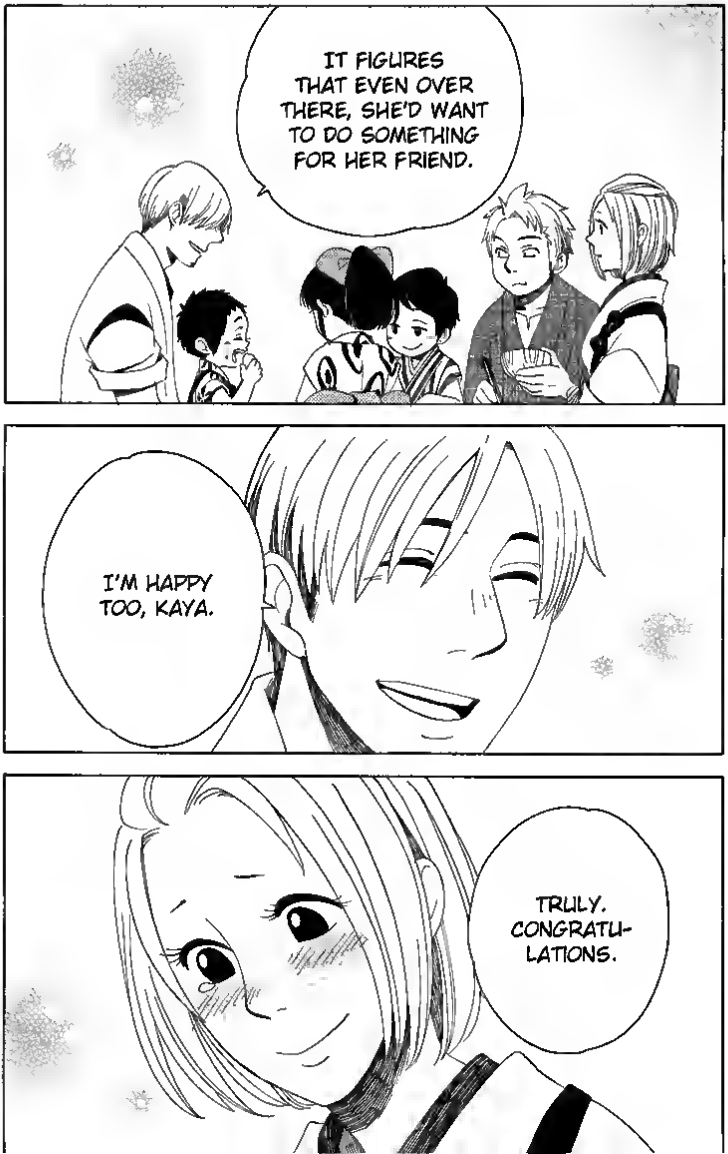
SHIORI APPEARED IN MY DREAM.


OKAY...

IN THE DREAM, I WAS STANDING SOMEWHERE LIKE A FLOWER GARDEN.
THERE WERE MANY CHILDREN PLAYING THERE.
AND SHIORI WAS AMONG THEM.
WHEN SHIORI NOTICED ME, SHE CALLED OUT TWO CHILDREN AND BROUGHT THEM TOWARDS ME
THEN SHE SAID THIS...


THEY TOLD ME THEY'RE FINALLY READY TO GO OVER.
CONGRATULATIONS, KAYA.
AND THEN... I WOKE UP.

AT FIRST, I THOUGHT IT WAS JUST A DREAM,
BUT A FEW WEEKS LATER I FOUND OUT I WAS PREGNANT. AND I THOUGHT...
I SEE. THIS IS THE CHILD SHIORI BROUGHT TO ME.
YOU MEAN THESE CHILDREN, RIGHT?
THAT'S RIGHT. IN MY DREAM THERE WERE TWO CHILDREN.
SO I'M SURE WE'LL HAVE ANOTHER...
HOW LIKE SHIORI.


IT FIGURES THAT EVEN OVER THERE, SHE'D WANT TO DO SOMETHING FOR HER FRIEND.
I'M HAPPY TOO, KAYA.
TRULY. CONGRATU-LATIONS.

...
?
SANA?
MAN, KAYA WHEN YOU FIRST CAME OUT OF THE HOUSE I THOUGHT FOR A SECOND YOU WERE MY SISTER. IT GAVE ME CHILLS.
BY THE WAY, HOW IS YOUR MOTHER, SANA? I BET SHE'S BUSY, RIGHT?
!
TORAKICHI, DON'T YOU KNOW?
KNOW WHAT?
...
SORRY, UNCLE TORA-KICHI.
WE DIDN'T WANT YOU TO WORRY, SO WE HAVEN'T TOLD YOU YET...
THE TRUTH IS, MAMA...

TIZIP
TIZIP
RATTLE
WE'RE HOME!
PAPA!
SLIDE
SHH!
IS MAMA SLEEPING?
YEAH.

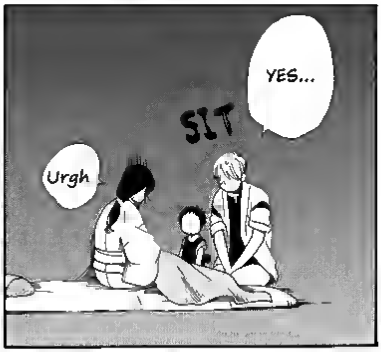
BROTHER-IN-LAW.
WEL-COME BACK.
GOOD WORK.
I HEARD EVERYTHING FROM KOUTA.
UM... HOW SHOULD I PUT THIS?

GLARE
CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR THIRD... CHILD?
WHAT?
FLINCH
TO HELL WITH CONGRATULATIONS! YOU THINK THIS IS THE TIME FOR THAT CRAP?!
BECAUSE OF HER SEVERE MORNING SICKNESS, TATSUMI CAN'T EAT. SHE CAN'T EVEN DRINK A SINGLE DROP OF WATER!
WHY!? THIS DIDN'T HAPPEN WITH THE TWO OLDER ONES!
TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, SHE BLED LAST WEEK.
THE DOCTOR SAID SHE NEEDS ABSOLUTE REST, BECAUSE THE CHILD COULD EASILY MISCARRY!
IT'S SO EXHAUSTING!
PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY!
WHY DOES MY WIFE ALWAYS HAVE TO EXPERIENCE SUCH PAIN?!
WAAAAAAAAAAH!

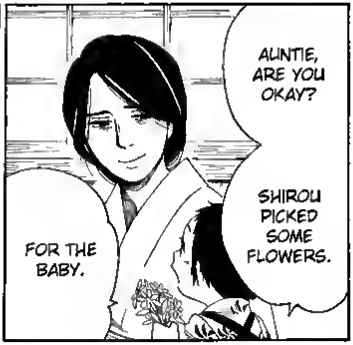
...
DAMN IT ALL!
IF I COULD, I WOULD TAKE HER PLACE!
...
SIGH
BYE!
Let's go, Shirou!
WAIT.
RUSTLE
WE ONLY CAME TO SEE HOW YOU WERE DOING, SO WE'LL GET GOING.
S-SORRY!
HIDE
AH.

SEE YOUR FACE BEFORE YOU LEAVE...!
LET ME...
Ugh.

UM,
WE'VE JUST RETURNED.
WE'RE BACK!


YES...
SIT
Urgh

YOU'VE GROWN SO MUCH AGAIN...
THANK YOU.


AUNTIE, ARE YOU OKAY?
SHIROU PICKED SOME FLOWERS.
FOR THE BABY.

COME TO THINK OF IT, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER SEEN HER SICK IN BED...
SHE'S LOST A LOT OF WEIGHT BECAUSE SHE CAN'T EAT...
I HAVEN'T SAID ANY-THING YET.
I'M SORRY! I WASN'T LISTENING...
OH?!
HAS ANYTHING CHANGED WITH YOU?
FLINCH
TORA.
YES?!

AH.
UM...
EVERYTHING'S FINE!

FOR ONLY HALF A YEAR...
I WAS AWAY FROM THE VILLAGE...
CIRCUM-STANCES
WELL, I GUESS THAT'S TO BE EXPECTED.
BUT EVERYBODY'S CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGED SO MUCH.

EXTRA STORY 27 - END